

Encouraging Involvement in the Church

Theme: Importance of involvement in a local church for the full spiritual health of anyone that we are discipling.

Instructional Objective: Lord willing, students will become convinced of the importance of encouraging any person they are discipling to be deeply involved in a local Church. Students will think about reasons this is important and about ways that they can teach and encourage another person on this point.

I. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN DISCIPLING

- Many young Christians go through their first regenerate days without anyone telling them how important it is for them to be involved in a local church. Whether that is the fault of the churches or the disciplers is unclear; in reality, it is probably both. Most churches are unaware of just how instrumental they really are in the Bible for evangelism and discipling. The disciplers, for their part, become convinced somehow that they are able to give a young Christian everything they need to mature in Christ. Well, that is just patently untrue, and the Bible is clear that the church is the most effective means of evangelism and discipleship that the Lord has given us.

II. THE LOCAL CHURCH IN THE BIBLE

- *Play a game here. Have everyone in the room find one reference in the New Testament where the word “church” is used in some form. There are 119 occurrences in the New Testament. Be sure to have an exhaustive concordance ready for anyone who needs help. (Incidentally, this is a good opportunity to casually point out what a concordance is for. It’s a useful tool for young Christians and disciplers.) Go around the room and let each person read the verse they found. Don’t let the same verse be used twice if you can avoid it. Have the class say whether each use is of the church local or the church universal. At the end, you will find that most of the people in your class found a verse that refers to a particular body of Christians gathered in a local place.*
- When the Bible speaks of the church, over 100 of 119 speak of the church local. God seems to have a special interest in the locally gathered body of believers. That is what we are here at CHBC. We are the “Church at Capitol Hill” just like Paul speaks to the “church at Ephesus” or Jesus to the “church at Smyrna” or Philadelphia in Revelation.

III. THE CHURCH IN EVANGELISM

- One of the most important tools in evangelism is the witness of the church. The sight of scores of Christians coming together to worship, to share their lives together, and to be accountable to one another is a powerful testimony to the power of Christ. *Read John 13:34-35. “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* How will people know that we are disciples of Christ? By seeing the love that we show to one another in the church!
- *Read also Acts 2:42-47.* The last sentence of this paragraph says that the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. The corporate testimony of these Christians as they shared in one another’s lives was one of the main tools that God used to bring people into the church.

- When you are sharing the gospel with someone, bring them to church! This is important because they will be able to see how the members of the body function with one another. Another important reason to bring friends that you are evangelizing to the meeting of the church is that it is there that they will hear the preaching of the word. *Read Acts 2:37-41.* What was the instrument of these people's salvation? God saved them through the preaching of His word! "When the people *heard* this." *Now read Romans 10:14-17.* It has been true since the beginning of time that God saves people through His word. It is important for non-Christians to hear the gospel preached. That is the means that God has appointed for the redemption of the world.

IV. THE BENEFITS OF THE CHURCH TO A DISCIPLE

- It is vitally important that a person covenant with a church (a group of believers) as soon as he becomes a Christian. Why?
- *Read Romans 12:9-15.* What words do you see here that describe how members of the church are to relate to one another? How is that different from the world? How could those things be strengthening and encouraging to a young Christian? What benefits would a young Christian gain from being involved in a church?

V. GIFTS IN THE CHURCH—THEIR BENEFIT TO A DISCIPLER

- No one of us is endowed with the full complement of gifts necessary to bring a young Christian to full maturity. Each of us in the church is gifted in a certain way with abilities that allow us to minister in various places and to various needs. But we are also lacking in some places, so that if we were to try to bring a young Christian to maturity on our own, we would find that our friend would be lacking effective training in some key areas. When we plug a disciple into the church, though, the body of Christ begins to do its work. The areas where you, the discipler, are weak may be filled by another who is strong in those areas but weak in others. That's why God elected a kingdom and not a single person!

Isn't it awesome how God has constructed His church in this way? No one of us can claim credit for bringing anyone to maturity. No, it is the work of the whole church, gifted by God, to edify and mature a believer. All of the strengths and weaknesses of the members of the church, when they're put together, come together in a perfect fit, so that we can all be edified and encouraged by one another.

- *Read I Corinthians 12:7-21.* God has gifted each of us in different ways. There are a lot of tests out there that claim to be able to tell us which of these gifts have been given to us. Whatever the usefulness of those, I think it is useful for us to take stock of where God has gifted us. Perhaps even more useful, though, is taking stock of those areas where we are weak, those areas where the church as a whole would have to pick up our slack in discipling another person. Where are you lacking? Where is it necessary for the church to help you in discipling? That is perhaps some of the most useful information we can know.

Encouraging Involvement in the Church, Part II

I. INTRODUCTION

- The last class on the role of the church in discipling was more theological. We looked at the role the church plays in the Bible in evangelism and discipling. In this class, we want to look more practically at some of the ways that CHBC in particular can help you in a discipling relationship.

II. SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES.

- This is the main meeting of the church. Anybody who is a young Christian should be at this meeting, especially if they are members of the church (that is one of the things members covenant to do!). It is at this meeting that the Word is preached. That is the main spiritual meal of the week for the congregation. We discussed last time how the preached Word is the means that God has appointed to create and sustain His people. For that reason, non-Christians would benefit unspeakably from being at this service. Have great confidence in the Lord to save people through His word!! The Holy Spirit will honor the faithful preaching of His Word and draw people to Himself through it. For Christians, the preached Word is their spiritual nourishment. No Christian can grow without it. It is in the sermon that the Word of God is applied forcefully to their lives and God convicts them of sin and of righteousness.

III. SUNDAY EVENINGS

- This is another meeting that would be great for non-Christians to attend. We saw last week where Jesus says that they will know we are His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:34-35). This is the meeting of the church where that love is most in evidence. We pray for one another, share burdens and joys, and celebrate God's grace together. For young believers, this is a wonderful time for the body of Christ to be able to minister to them. Any Christian will benefit from the care that the church gathered will be able to show them.

IV. WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

- The church comes together at this time to study God's word together. It is here that a disciple will learn how to handle the Scriptures, how to read them and apply them for himself, and he will be involved in thinking through these issues with the church as a whole.

V. SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES

- There are several small group Bible studies that take place throughout the week. These could be very beneficial for a young Christian since they provide opportunities for relationships to form and for accountability to develop between people. They are also a good entry point for non-Christians. Small groups are non-threatening ways to introduce non-Christians to the church and to other Christians.

VI. ONE-ON-ONE DISCIPLING RELATIONSHIPS

- This is one of the most effective ways that the church ministers to one another. In fact, it is exactly what you have been learning to do here! If the church is to function as it should, and if we are to hold one another accountable as we should, and be involved in one another's lives as we should, then a network of these relationships needs to exist throughout the church.

VII. CONCLUSION:

- Involvement in the local church is hugely important for any believer. It is more important than their friendship with you! You will serve any new believer well by letting them know about the role that God almost certainly intends for the church to play in their life. If they learn to be deeply involved in a Biblical church through their time with you, you will have laid the groundwork for a lifetime of encouragement and accountability long after you are no longer a part of their life.